

RUBRIC FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF SL PROJECTS

GREM

Moral Education Research Group
Faculty of Education, University of Barcelona



RUBRIC FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF SL PROJECTS

Authors:

**Josep M. Puig, Xus Martín, Laura Rubio, Josep Palos, Mónica Gijón,
Maribel de la Cerda and Mariona Graell**

Collaborators:

Maria López-Dóriga, Laia Gómez, Mireia Páez and Laura Campo

This project has received funding from the 2013 RecerCaixa Programme.

If you would like to propose ideas to include in future editions of the rubric, please send them to:

rubricaapsgrem@gmail.com

Index

1. Why a rubric about SL?
2. Dimensions and levels
3. Needs
4. Service
5. Significance of the service
6. Learning
7. Participation
8. Group work
9. Reflection
10. Recognition
11. Assessment
12. Partnership
13. Consolidation in education centres
14. Consolidation in social organisations
15. Results of the rubric
16. From analysis to enhancement of the experience

1

Why a rubric about SL?

Service learning is a teaching methodology which combines the learning of contents, competences and values with service to the community in one sole activity.

Service learning involves employing knowledge to improve a specific aspect of reality, with the service turning into a training experience which offers new know-how. Learning and service become mutually beneficial: learning acquires civic significance and the service becomes a workshop of values and knowledge.

Service learning is a complex practice which combines interdependent dimensions that reinforce each other. Each experience shows a multi-faceted reality, difficult to evaluate due to the multiple aspects that make it up. The rubric will help us analyse, one by one, the dimensions that comprise service learning.

However, the process of enhancing a service-learning activity does not end with the analysis of its dimensions, but requires consideration of the relationships established among them. It entails seeing the experience as a whole, visualising the complexity of an activity and optimising it.

The rubric allows us to:

- **Identify the strengths and weaknesses of a service-learning experience.** Detailed analysis of the dimensions provides significant information about aspects that often go unnoticed during the process.
- **Facilitate pedagogical discussion.** The self-assessment process is an opportunity to reflect, share and contrast points of view, expectations and evaluations among members of the same educational team.
- **Optimise activities.** The result of the rubric is a good starting point for establishing realistic and contextualised improvement plans.
- **Identify diverse possibilities.** The dimensions that make up service learning admit different creative combinations, giving rise to varied experiences.
- **Inspire the implementation of new activities.** The intense presence of all dimensions is not necessarily essential for a service-learning experience to begin. Early levels can facilitate the introduction of simple activities which, over time, progress towards greater complexity.

The rubric should not:

- **Produce despondency.** No matter how discreet, each result indicates a success: the reality already achieved.
- **Provide a quantitative qualification.** Rather than set grades, the rubric should distinguish what is going well and which aspects could be improved.
- **Undervalue activities that have dimensions in the first levels of development.** In any activity, the natural process of implementation is through progressive growth.
- **Establish rankings among different centres.** The service-learning culture grows when the singularity of each stakeholder is recognised and appreciated.
- **Induce conformism.** Acceptable results also enable the quantity and quality of service-learning experiences to continue growing.

The rubric we present is a tool conceived to facilitate self-assessment and enhance already-existing service-learning experiences, as well as to encourage the design and implementation of new ones.

2

Dimensions and levels

This rubric is a tool designed to facilitate the self-assessment and enhancement of service-learning experiences.

It is primarily intended to facilitate detailed analysis and discussion of the educational characteristics of such experiences.

The rubric has two elements: dimensions and levels.

Once organised in line with objectives, *dimensions* are the pedagogical features that provide an overall shape to the service-learning experience. At least twelve dimensions can be distinguished, which will be defined briefly on the following page.

The *levels* indicate the degree of pedagogical development of each dimension. We have established four levels, in which the first refers to occasional, non-organised presence of the dimension and the fourth describes the fullest possible involvement of participants and an opening up to new stakeholders. Each level is considered pedagogically superior to the previous, although not all experiences need to reach the maximum level in each dimension.

The 12 dimensions that make up service learning have been established based on study of the relevant bibliography, analysis of significant experiences (<http://www.aprenentatgeservei.org>) and the use of prior theoretical works (AAVV: *Aprendizaje servicio. Educación y compromiso cívico*. Barcelona, Graó, 2009).

Dimensions

To enable analysis of service-learning experiences, the twelve dimensions have been grouped into three sections: basic, pedagogical and organisational. Basic dimensions are those that make up the core of service-learning experiences, that which cannot be lacking under any circumstances. Pedagogical refers to the training dimensions which constitute the educational proposals. And finally, organisational dimensions address the logistical and institutional aspects of service learning.

<p>Basic</p>	<p>Needs: Shortcomings or difficulties presented by the reality of a particular situation and which, once detected, require actions aimed at improving that situation.</p> <p>Service: Set of tasks which are carried out altruistically and which produce a good that contributes towards alleviating certain needs.</p> <p>Significance of the service: Refers to the impact of the activity carried out, with respect to either the social benefit it produces or the civic awareness demonstrated by those performing it.</p> <p>Learning: Knowledge, competences, behaviours and values acquired spontaneously or through the educators.</p>
<p>Pedagogical</p>	<p>Participation: Intervention carried out by participants in an activity with the intention of contributing, together with other stakeholders, to its design, application and assessment.</p> <p>Group work: Process of peer assistance aimed at the preparation and development of an activity undertaken by all participants.</p> <p>Reflection: Mechanism for the optimisation of learning based on consideration of the experience, in order to make sense of it and acquire new knowledge.</p> <p>Recognition: Set of actions intended to let participants in the activity know that they have carried it out correctly.</p> <p>Assessment: Process by which information is obtained to discover participants' performance in an activity and thus enable feedback to be offered which can help them improve.</p>
<p>Organisational</p>	<p>Partnership: Collaboration between two or more independent social institutions aimed at the joint performance of an activity.</p> <p>Centre consolidation: Process by which a formal or non-formal education centre discovers, pilots, integrates and supports any service-learning project.</p> <p>Organisation consolidation: Process by which a social organisation discovers, pilots, integrates and supports any service-learning project.</p>

3

Needs

In service learning, the term “needs” is employed to describe situations of deprivation, injustice or difficulty that produce indignation and prompt individuals to commit to improving other people’s quality of life, as well as that of their environment and citizenship in general.

Needs are the starting point in service learning and can take many forms: economic, environmental, educational, social, employment, and so on.

They require analysis of the explanations and experiences of those affected as well as of the economic, political and social factors that bring these about. Significant involvement of the young participants in this needs analysis fosters their motivation and commitment to the project.

The needs dimension invites participants to think less about their own personal world and view the community in a critical, responsible way. The aim here is for the youngsters to become more aware of the problems in society and to commit critically and creatively to a goal of social improvement. A task distanced from neutrality and welfarism, which seeks to awaken their role as critical agents in responsible citizenship.

CRITERIA:

- **Involve the young people² in the detection and analysis of needs.**
- **Devote specific time and activities to a critical comprehension of reality.**

2 In the guide we refer to “young people” because SL projects in Catalonia involve not only school pupils but also members of “esplais” or youth associations.

Levels

1. **Unknown needs.** The needs are not programmed and no activities are planned to detect or define them, though they are probably present in the project.

No time in the project is devoted to analysis of or reflection on the needs that give rise to the service tasks. It is possible that no critical comprehension of reality is undertaken because either the situation is obvious or the needs are highly present.

2. **Presented needs.** The educators and/or social organisations choose the needs the service will address, without consulting participants.

Educators and social organisations conduct a prior exercise of detecting the needs they will address and agree on a joint project to present to participants. An example of such practice would be when a “food drive” is being organised and time is devoted to explaining the need for such action and the situation of those affected.

3. **Decided needs.** Participants, often together with the educators, decide the needs they wish to address by analysing problematic situations and subsequently selecting of one of them.

The young participants play a greater role in choosing the needs. The educators foster moments of dialogue and critical comprehension which enable the group to take an active part in the decision. They can present other needs they would like to address and establish, usually in agreement with the educators, which to become involved in as a result of their analysis.

4. **Discovered needs.** Participants discover the needs by conducting a group research project that involves a critical comprehension of reality.

The youngsters take part in a research process that takes time and involves multiple spaces of analysis, reflection and dialogue. Either the group or the educator facilitates contact with the reality through documentaries, short videos and photographs, interviews or life stories. The research project transforms indignation into motivation and collective commitment to action.

4

Service

The service element is real work which participants carry out in an organised manner with the aim of altruistically producing a good which is useful to the community.

There are various areas of service: mentoring in training, providing close support to those who need it, the intergenerational relationship, conservation of the environment or cultural heritage, citizenship participation, cooperation projects, and so on.

In any of these cases, the service activities represent a specific, significant, quality contribution in the face of a social need. This may materialise in the form of activities to raise awareness of the situation or censure it, the exchange of knowledge, direct intervention or fund raising, among others.

The service offers a clear opportunity to learn by doing and to contribute in an authentic and positive way in an area that demands mobilisation and commitment.

CRITERIA:

- **Allocate time to conducting the service-learning tasks.**
- **Carry out a diverse range of tasks that develop different competences.**
- **Require a certain level of personal dedication and involvement.**

Levels

1. **Simple service.** Short-term service comprising simple tasks whose execution represents limited involvement and demands on participants.

The service-learning tasks are very specific and concentrated in a short space of time, such as holding a day of solidarity or collecting money or materials for a social cause. These are simple tasks, but they can be carried out with enormous enthusiasm.

2. **Continued service.** Long-term service comprising repetitive and/or easy-to-learn tasks whose execution requires moderate involvement and demands on participants.

The service-learning actions are conducted on a continuous basis, though the tasks to be carried out mean only relative difficulty to participants, as they involve a certain routine or mechanisation. Such is the case, for instance, of services that require the selection, organisation and preparation of products or clothes for families who need them. This type of service often does not entail direct relations with its recipients.

3. **Complex service.** Long-term service which enables experience and skills to be acquired in the execution of tasks of considerable complexity which represent high levels of involvement and demands on participants.

Execution of the service requires the implementation of various competences on the part of participants. This may be because the need exists from the outset, such as when a group of young people participate in recovering wooded areas after a forest fire, or because the service demands relations with others and thus taking decisions and adapting in an unforeseen situation. This could be the case of experiences in which the youngsters mentor or teach other groups.

4. **Creative service.** Service of variable duration made up of complex tasks designed by the participants themselves to resolve a problematic situation which requires creativity and, thus, still higher levels of involvement and demands on those participants.

The tasks to be carried out during the service are not defined beforehand; rather it is the participants who must design them, bringing their combined knowledge and skills into play. An example of this would be when an organisation asks a group of university students to help find a solution to some specific difficulty. Their response could well become the first edition of a project in which participants take charge of creating a service that did not exist before.

5

Significance of the service

In contrast to service as work in and for the community, significance of the service refers to the social and personal dimension of the experience, the whys and wherefores of participants' responsible action in a specific situation.

On the one hand, significance of the service is about its usefulness, in other words, how capable it is of providing a suitable response to the social needs it addresses.

On the other, significance also depends on the young people's personal awareness of the social dimensions of the service. In other words, it is important that participants not only carry out the planned actions, but are also aware of the value their contribution has to the community of which they form part and recognise as their own, and with which they are demonstrating their commitment.

CRITERIA:

- **Impact positively on the social needs and the community.**
- **Be aware of and foster the social dimension of the service.**

Levels

1. ***Incidental service.*** Service which does not arise out of a detected need and whose possible social dimension is not perceived by participants.

Though the project does not directly target offering a service to the community and such service is not indispensable, conducting the activity makes a positive contribution to the environment. For example, when a group from an education centre prepares a play and afterwards decides to perform it in a home for the elderly.

2. ***Necessary service.*** Service which responds to a community need, though participants do not always perceive its social dimension.

The social dimension inherent in the service is not entirely obvious to its participants. This could be the case of a fund-raising campaign in which the group does not directly know the organisation, community or cause for which the aid is intended or has not jointly assessed the benefits that aid could bring.

3. ***Civic service.*** Service which responds to a community need, with participants being aware of its social dimension.

The point of departure for planning and development of the service is participants' desire to cooperate in situations that require their direct involvement. Actively participating in the detection of need, obtaining information about the organisation to which the service is directed or devoting time to evaluating the impact of the intervention are all aspects that can be beneficial in raising awareness of the service's social dimension.

4. ***Transformative service.*** Participants provide a response to a need and are aware of its social dimension. However, they are also aware of the limitations of any service that fails to consider political action.

In addition to performing a service which is useful to the community and to being aware of the social significance of their work – for example, improving the autonomy and empowering beneficiaries of the service – participants also come to recognise that political action and public policies are often the only way to really alleviate social need. They see that no service action can achieve the same objectives, though that does not detract from the usefulness of their service to the community.

6

Learning

Learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge, competences, skills, abilities, behaviours and values. Two types of learning coexist in service learning. The first is spontaneous learning, which the youngsters acquire as they participate in the activity, while the other consists in the learning promoted by educators on the basis of designed tasks and exercises. Open, flexible planning is beneficial to the quality of the experience and enables the young people to take the fullest educational advantage of their participation.

Each educational institution decides which learning contents it wishes to offer the target group. In some cases these are precisely defined proposals (as in the case of the school curriculum), while in others they may be less clear or even not formally established.

Mechanisms for the acquisition of learning are varied and complementary. Of particular interest in service learning are practical participation, observation, cooperative activity, investigation and direct experience.

CRITERIA:

- Programme activities aimed at the acquisition of learning.
- Link learning to the service activity.

Levels

1. ***Spontaneous learning.*** The learning experiences are not programmed and there are no activities planned to facilitate them. They are acquired informally during the service.

Although no activities are planned, the youngsters almost inadvertently acquire values and skills directly linked to the activity. For example, participation in a “food drive” campaign can enhance their knowledge about food and develop such values as solidarity and cooperation.

2. ***Planned learning.*** The learning experiences are programmed in accordance with the curriculum or educational project, and activities are designed to acquire them without necessarily taking into account their relation to the service.

The activity is centred on curricular learning, but also encompasses that which is spontaneously acquired during the service. The result is that both tend to function in parallel and their link is usually weak. Conducting a social inequality awareness-raising project and simultaneously carrying out volunteering activities is one example.

3. ***Useful learning.*** The planned learning experiences and educational activities are closely related to the service. Their acquisition contributes to enhancing the quality of the intervention.

Educators deliberately adapt curricular content to preparation of the service in such a way that the young people become aware of the usefulness of what they are learning, since they have to apply it in real situations. This is the case of the technical skills acquired by a group as they build a wooden play-corner for a nursery school.

4. ***Innovative learning.*** The learning experiences are acquired on the basis of a research activity, are related to the curriculum or educational project and directly linked to the service to the community.

The youngsters learn as they conduct research aimed at training and preparing their action in the community. Educators guide the learning process but do not determine its results, which remain open to innovation. Project work is an appropriate methodology for this level.

7

Participation

Participation is an educational dimension that refers to the relationship existing between individual action and the group project. It is developed through practice and impacts on group motivation as regards the activity and the role assumed by the group throughout the process.

The young people in service learning participate by offering proposals, taking decisions, and cooperating in the management of a project, as well as undertaking actions aimed at achieving the common goal they have established or leading an experience.

Interventions designed to attain greater degrees of participation on the part of the youngsters should be implemented by the adults. These include planning the tasks, producing spaces and mechanisms of participation, delegating responsibilities, stimulating personal and group initiative, trusting in the group potential and monitoring the process.

A group's possibilities of participation usually depend on various factors, among them the age of its members and their previous experience in participatory activities.

CRITERIA:

- **Involvement of the young people in all phases of the activity.**

Levels

1. ***Closed participation.*** Participants limit their involvement to executing the previously planned activities, without being able to introduce modifications to the initial proposal.

Educators ask the group to carry out a specific task or join in with an activity completely designed beforehand. This is the case, for instance, of participation in a marathon organised to raise public awareness of a particular health problem, such as breast cancer.

2. ***Defined participation.*** Participants carry out one-off activities as required by the educators at different points in the process.

The activity provides for the youngsters to take decisions about specific matters which do not substantially alter the process. Development of the activity is the responsibility of the educators. An example of such participation would be when a group of preadolescents is allowed to choose the workshops they should organise during an event aimed at raising funds for a social cause.

3. ***Shared participation.*** Participants and their educators share responsibility in the design and development of the activity as a whole.

The educational team seeks the youngsters' involvement from initiation of the activity up to its conclusion. Together they decide what service to conduct and the learning they should acquire. Project-work methodology promotes experiences at this level, since it facilitates intense participation throughout the entire process of a service-learning activity.

4. ***Spearheaded participation.*** The young people become promoters and leaders of the project and thus participate in all its phases, taking decisions on all relevant aspects.

Group members initiate a service-learning activity based on a problem that concerns them and assume its leadership throughout. Projects defending natural heritage or any other cause which arises out of the social fabric of a community are fine examples of this level of participation.

8

Group work

Group work refers to the processes of peer assistance originating in preparation and development of the activity. It is a pedagogical dimension with significant educational potential and a key characteristic of service-learning methodology, taking place between people playing similar roles in the project.

Though mutual help can arise spontaneously in any joint intervention, it tends to be intentional in the case of service learning: educators promote it for clearly educational reasons among those offering the service.

These processes are highly educational since they foster interpersonal relationships among participants, the creation of affective bonds, peer exchange of knowledge and enrichment of the group as a whole. Factors that have extremely positive impact on the nature and quality of the activity.

Moreover, mutual assistance processes bring out competences and values that are fundamental for participants' personal development and growth.

CRITERIA:

- **Positive interdependence: connection and relationship between participants and their interventions.**
- **Deliberate educational purpose of assistance processes.**

Levels

1. *Undetermined group work.* Spontaneous processes of assistance among participants who conduct an individual service activity.

The service is taken on by one person in particular, but development of the activity can produce non-programmed, casual peer-assistance processes. This may be the case for example when a group of young people undertakes a personal research project with service to the community: the tasks are independent but participants share one same process, which can lead them to cooperate

2. *Collaborative group work.* Processes based on the contribution of participants in a group project that requires bringing together different autonomous and independent tasks.

Collaboration takes place because participants work to achieve one common goal through their individual contribution. We refer to projects like maintenance and conservation of the natural environment: peer input originates because the service results from the sum of the individual participants' actions.

3. *Cooperative group work.* Process of interdependent work among participants in a group project which requires the organisation of complementary contributions to achieve a common goal.

Peer assistance is essential, because participants have to complement each other in roles and functions when performing the service. These are projects in which the young people all seek one same objective that can only be achieved on the basis of individual and/or group contributions, which are linked and inter-related. Projects which involve participants forming committees during the service illustrate this situation.

4. *Expansive group work.* Group work goes beyond the initial number of participants and actively integrates other external agents, thus creating community action networks.

The assistance extends outside the original group performing the service and new participants become involved. An example of this may be when a group of youngsters work to prepare and implement a neighbourhood solidarity concert and young people from other centres and organisations actively take part.

9

Reflection

Reflection is a mechanism for the optimisation of learning, a dimension which is interwoven into the experience to explore it in depth and learn from it.

It is an exercise in *remembering what one has lived* in order to examine it with greater attention, thereby increasing the knowledge and skills obtained. It then becomes possible to look to the future with enhanced understanding of the reality and better prospects of acting upon it with success.

Reflection also allows us to analyse the emotions the experience has aroused in us and to look critically at reality, lending social meaning to the service-learning activity as a whole.

Consequently, reflection is an operation that focuses on the questions raised by reality, on the search for effective action, on participants' experiences, on the civic meaning of their intervention and on the critical view that reality can awaken.

CRITERIA:

- Programme times and activities to facilitate reflection.
- Link reflection to the overall service-learning experience.
- Make public use of the results obtained during reflection.

Levels

1. ***Vague reflection.*** Active reflection is not anticipated and tasks to promote it are not proposed, though each participant's experience can be considered and discussed spontaneously.

Though the service-learning activity does not include times or tasks aimed at reflecting upon the way the experience has been lived, educators can informally promote reflective conversations and participants can spontaneously become more aware of what they have experienced, possibly sharing their memories with others.

2. ***Occasional reflection.*** Reflection is programmed and tasks are planned to facilitate it, though it occupies only a limited amount of time which is separated from the project's established course of activities.

On conclusion of the service-learning activity time is usually devoted to conducting certain reflective exercises, such as sharing impressions with other participants, reliving the process by discussing photographs of it, indicating the learning experiences they recall and analysing the positive and negative aspects of the intervention.

3. ***Continuous reflection.*** In addition to times and tasks assigned for reflection, participants conduct reflective exercises throughout the entire project

At one or more points in the service-learning experience a working session is devoted to conducting reflective or sharing activities, usually as a group. They are always preceded by reflective tasks participants carry out throughout the project, which usually include writing diaries, regular exercises and meetings and producing photographic or video reports.

4. ***Productive reflection.*** In addition to being planned and continuous, reflection involves participants in an activity of synthesis or creation which produces a new benefit to the community.

The complex reflective processes we have seen take on another dimension: they encourage participants to produce a new product with a view to making it public. The service-learning activity can be concluded by putting on a play for the families based on the experience, organising an exhibition around the activity, or publishing a message or demand in the media.

10

Recognition

In service-learning activities, recognition by the educators and adults involved means informing participants in the service that they have performed it very well and, in the case of the recipients, expressing how grateful they are to have benefited from their hard work.

Recognition brings together two complementary dimensions: firstly, the need to return to participants something that highlights the virtue of the work they have done and, secondly, the educational effect that such recognition has on participants' personal development, performance of competences and civic engagement.

The most usual ways of expressing recognition are positive reinforcement from educators, respect from the beneficiaries of the service or the social organisation, and civic accolade given by the community or local authority. In sum, three manners of showing participants that the experience has been a success.

CRITERIA:

- **Ensure there are dedicated times planned and designed for conducting recognition activities.**
- **Seek to engage participation by all stakeholders in the recognition activity: educators, social organisations, recipients of the service and local authority.**

Levels

1. **Casual recognition.** No recognition activities are planned, though different agents may spontaneously offer their gratitude and appreciation for the tasks undertaken by participants.

Although no time or activity is programmed in the service-learning activity to show the positive assessment of and gratitude for the work done, there are many moments that educators and recipients of the service can take advantage of to offer their thanks to participants and praise their efforts.

2. **Intended recognition.** The educators organise activities aimed at positively reinforcing participants' work and/or celebrating the conclusion of the service.

The educators organise an activity to recognise participants' input. This will often coincide with assessment or final reflection activities; on other occasions a function is organised to which family-members are invited and participants' efforts and results are celebrated.

3. **Reciprocal recognition.** Beneficiaries of the service and/or the social organisations, often in conjunction with the educators, carry out initiatives to express their gratitude and celebrate the success of the service.

As part of the recognition activity organised by the centre or on the initiative of the social organisation and/or recipients of the service, appreciation of the participants' dedication is shown by doing something in return that they will appreciate. This could perhaps consist in a function held in the centre during which gratitude is expressed publicly, or by organising a gathering with refreshments to thank participants and share memories of the experience.

4. **Public recognition.** Recognition of the participants acquires a public dimension, either because the activity is made known to the general public or because the local authority publicly expresses its gratitude and highlights the civic value of the service.

At this level, in addition to reinforcement by the educators and gratitude from the organisations and recipients, public recognition is offered that goes beyond the area directly involved in the activity. In some cases the media report the activity, in others the local authority organises a festive event or presents an award to the leading centres, or in yet others an exhibition is mounted displaying the activities in which the service-learning consisted.

Assessment

When we speak of assessment we refer to a mechanism and a process in which educators apply instruments, activities and moments of reflection and evaluation. The aim of this process is to explore how the activities were developed in order to introduce corrective elements, identify factors that explain the results obtained and offer participants feedback that will help them improve.

Assessment activities have a two-fold purpose: to resolve difficulties and mistakes and thus optimise the youngsters' level of competence, and to evaluate results with the aim of accrediting and improving design and application of the activity.

Inasmuch as they offer youngsters the opportunity to act in real-life problem situations, service-learning activities present excellent opportunities to conduct the assessment of numerous competences.

CRITERIA:

- **Definition of the assessment plan: intention, elements, instruments, times, activities, participation of organisations, return, solutions and accreditation.**
- **Elements to be assessed: goals, competence criteria and indicators of the learning experiences.**
- **Participation of the young people in their own evaluation as part of a shared assessment.**

Levels

1. ***Informal evaluation.*** No assessment plan is established, though educators may on their own initiative occasionally make an assessment and communicate their findings to participants.

Service-learning activities are conducted with no participant assessment plan in place: satisfaction gained from the activity is the only return received. However, this absence does not preclude educators from offering their opinion on any aspect of participants' actions or the results obtained.

2. ***Intuitive evaluation.*** To conduct their assessment, educators simply record, with no defined criteria or indicators, the achievement of certain general learning goals which can be accredited.

Educators assess the service-learning activities by going over each participant's approach to them, highlighting the values learned and the goals achieved, as well as the aspects in which they have shown the most significant limitations. There is no plan; rather the assessment is based on feelings and the educators' instinctive, approximate evaluation.

3. ***Competence-based evaluation.*** The educators apply an assessment plan which defines goals, criteria, indicators and methodologies to improve and accredit participants' competence development.

Adhering to a previously agreed assessment plan, educators use instruments that enable them to obtain criteria-based information about what participants are doing and thus determine which aspects are going well and which could be improved. The assessment is usually discussed at team level and then communicated to the young participant, enabling each party to be aware of what they have learned, where they could do better and how.

4. ***Joint evaluation.*** Together with the educators, participants actively intervene at different stages in the preparation and application process of a competence assessment plan.

Educators involve participants throughout the entire assessment process, from discussion of the goals and indicators up to final consideration of the experience. This process encompasses self-appraisal and co-assessment and, above all, an emphasis on joint evaluation through dialogue, which heightens the educational potential of service-learning activities and the feeling of sharing a project.

12

Partnership

In the case of service learning, partnership is a process of seeking agreement with at least one social organisation, which contributes the service space being offered to the youngsters, and an educational agent, responsible for providing the project participants and transforming it into a learning process.

Partnership processes require two or more stakeholders for a mutually agreed project to go ahead. The process begins with definition of the roles, functions and responsibilities that each partner must assume in the initiative.

Establishment of partnerships permits the best use to be made of each institution's resources, greater advantage to be obtained from working together and, above all, the execution of a project which would be almost impossible alone.

The exchange of knowledge and actions leads to positive institutional and social transformation. To achieve this, the relationship requires mutual cooperation to ensure the agreed goal is assumed by all.

CRITERIA:

- **The existence of partners.**
- **Joint creation and design of the project.**

Levels

1. ***Unilateral partnership.*** One, sole organisation, usually an educational institution, participates in the project, either because it has direct access to the service space, or because the recipient of the service forms part of that organisation.

The project is unilaterally designed by one organisation, with no partners. Two types of project usually appear at this level: for example when, following an environmental study, a group decides the town's beach needs cleaning and organises an initiative to do the job; or when older pupils at a school carry out regular reinforcement activities with their younger schoolmates.

2. ***Directed partnership.*** At least two organisations participate in the project: the educational institution that plans and executes it, and the social organisation that simply provides the service venue.

The project is designed by one, usually educational, organisation, which needs a partner to provide the service space. The social organisation does not apply the project, but facilitates its development. An example of this would be when a group of young people create a garden in the local park. The town council authorises the project, but does not directly intervene in its execution.

3. ***Agreed partnership.*** At least two organisations – one educational and another social – jointly agree upon the conditions of application of a service-learning project which one of them has exclusively designed.

The project has been designed by one sole organisation, though how it will materialise is yet to be determined. Agreement on application must be reached with the partner. The Blood Bank of Catalonia has a project aimed at promoting donation and raising public awareness in which the general lines are well established, but whose finer details are adapted to each application in accordance with characteristics of the centres and situations.

4. ***Built partnership.*** The organisations involved in the project jointly design and apply it from its initiation until the end of the process.

The idea of the project arises between two or more organisations that decide to design, apply, evaluate and celebrate it jointly. Each organisation contributes its experience and know-how to draw up a project that benefits them, at the same time as it improves the environment.

13

Consolidation in education centres

Consolidation of service learning is a process undertaken in education centres and is initiated incipiently, growing through moments of progressive involvement, integration and assimilation at different levels until it forms part of the institution's culture.

Various aspects are involved, ranging from context, principles and methodological lines, along with characteristics of the teaching teams and other professionals, to the organisational structure and adaptability they adopt. These elements interact and shape the process, making each case unique.

The process of consolidation is long and complex, and may become diverse and lacking in visibility. It is therefore necessary to plan and establish criteria, moments and instruments to reflect the state of progress.

CRITERIA:

- **Conduct and evaluate projects in the centre.**
- **Become involved in the centre's organisational and educational structure.**
- **Include service learning as part of the centre's identity and culture.**

Levels

1. ***Incipient consolidation.*** Service learning is known about because of a project already being carried out by an educator or due to the presentation of an experience undertaken in another centre.

Service learning is present in the centre because one of its teachers has carried out an isolated project or because the presentation of an extreme external experience has aroused the interest of teaching staff who, nonetheless, have not committed to undertaking any SL experience.

2. ***Accepted consolidation.*** Service learning projects conducted as the result of a personal initiative are recognised by the centre's management team and backed by the teaching staff.

The centre acknowledges and accepts the dissemination and evaluation of experiences it has conducted internally, the transformation of experiences similar to service learning or the initiation of a new project. Training activities for interested teaching staff are facilitated or planned.

3. ***Integrated consolidation.*** Service learning is present in more than one educational level, is linked to the curriculum of various subjects, and has implications in the centre's working methodology and organisation.

The centre encourages service-learning projects, includes them in its annual programmes and takes related organisational and educational questions into account. Coordination meetings address the possibilities of undertaking a joint project. A process of monitoring, dissemination and evaluation of the projects being conducted is initiated.

4. ***Identity-defining consolidation.*** Service learning forms part of the centre's culture and its educational project, and the centre presents it as a feature of its identity.

The centre analyses the context and its strengths with a view to conducting service-learning projects. It examines organisational aspects and guidelines, taking the peculiarities of this methodology into account. Service-learning projects are included in the annual course programmes as preferred activities and linked to the different areas or subjects. The centre programmes monitoring of the projects and evaluation of their effect on the young people's learning outcomes.

14

Consolidation in social organisations

Consolidation of service learning is also a process undertaken in a social organisation and is initiated incipiently, growing through moments of progressive involvement, integration and assimilation at different levels until it forms part of the institution's culture.

Various aspects are involved, ranging from context, principles and methodological lines, along with characteristics of the teaching teams and other professionals, to the organisational structure and adaptability they adopt. These elements interact and shape the process, making each case unique.

The process of consolidation is long and complex, and may become diverse and lacking in visibility. It is therefore necessary to plan and establish criteria, moments and instruments to reflect the state of progress.

CRITERIA:

- Conduct and evaluate projects in the organisation.
- Become involved in its organisational structure.
- Include service learning in the organisation's mission and identity.

Levels

1. ***Incipient consolidation.*** Service learning is known about because the organisation is already participating in an SL experience or due to the presentation of a project undertaken in another organisation.

The approach to service learning is made through a specific project or piece of information. It is brought to the organisation's attention as the result of an external experience or initial training in which one of its professionals is involved, but without entering into a formal commitment to take part in an SL intervention.

2. ***Accepted consolidation.*** Service learning projects are recognised by the organisation's management and staff, who accept the organisation's educational role.

The organisation recognises the educational role and community-service element, considers the possibility of developing them through service learning and establishes the organisational instruments to coordinate and monitor possible projects. Dissemination activities are organised, experiences evaluated and some form of training planned for interested parties.

3. ***Integrated consolidation.*** Service learning is present in the organisation's programme of activities, and the organisation has the structure and staff necessary to ensure its implementation.

The organisation identifies the learning and service activities it conducts and links them to its goals. In this case, the organisation initiates a monitoring process and evaluates the projects and training undertaken.

4. ***Identity-defining consolidation.*** Service learning forms part of the organisation's ethos and is presented as a characteristic of its identity. The organisation assigns the resources necessary to ensure the implementation of SL projects.

The organisation analyses context and its own strengths with a view to carrying out service-learning projects. It includes the projects in its programming, assigns them resources and reviews its organisation and rules with the peculiarities of service learning in mind. The organisation plans the monitoring and evaluation of the effect of service learning on its goals.

	I	II	
BASIC	Needs	Unknown. The needs are not programmed and no activities are planned to detect or define them, though they are probably present in the project.	Presented. The educators and/or social organisations choose the needs the service will address, without consulting participants.
	Service	Simple. Short-term service comprising simple tasks whose execution represents limited involvement and demands on participants	Continued. S Long-term service comprising repetitive and/or easy-to-learn tasks whose execution requires moderate involvement and demands on participants
	Significance of the service	Incidental. Service which does not arise out of a detected need and whose possible social dimension is not perceived by participants.	Necessary. Service which responds to a community need, though participants do not always perceive its social dimension.
	Learning	Spontaneous. The learning experiences are not programmed and there are no activities planned to facilitate them. They are acquired informally during the service.	Planned. The learning experiences are programmed in accordance with the curriculum or educational project and activities are designed to acquire them without necessarily taking into account their relation to the service.
PEDAGOGICAL	Participation	Closed. Participants limit their involvement to executing the previously planned activities, without being able to introduce modifications to the initial proposal.	Defined. Participants carry out one-off activities required by the educators at different points in the process
	Group work	Undetermined. Spontaneous processes of assistance among participants who conduct an individual service activity.	Collaborative. Processes based on the contribution of participants in a group project that requires bringing together different autonomous and independent tasks.
	Reflection	Vague. Active reflection is not anticipated and tasks to promote it are not proposed, though each participant's experience can be considered and discussed spontaneously.	Occasional. Reflection is programmed and tasks are planned to facilitate it, though it occupies only a limited amount of time which is separated from the project's established course of activities.
	Recognition	Casual. No recognition activities are planned, though different agents may spontaneously offer their gratitude and appreciation for the tasks undertaken by participants.	Intended. The educators organise activities aimed at positively reinforcing participants' work and/or celebrating the conclusion of the service.
	Assessment	Informal. No assessment plan is established, though educators may on their own initiative occasionally make an assessment and communicate their findings to participants.	Intuitive. To conduct their assessment, educators simply record, with no defined criteria or indicators, the achievement of certain general learning goals which can be accredited.
ORGANISATIONAL	Partnership	Unilateral. One, sole organisation, usually an educational institution, participates in the project, either because it has direct access to the service space, or because the recipient of the service forms part of that organisation.	Directed. At least two organisations participate in the project: the educational institution that plans and executes it, and the social organisation that simply provides the service space.
	Centre consolidation	Incipient. Service learning is known about because of a project already being carried out by an educator or due to the presentation of an experience undertaken in another centre.	Accepted. Service learning projects conducted as the result of a personal initiative are recognised by the centre's management team and backed by the teaching staff.
	Organisation consolidation	Incipient. Service learning is known about because the organisation is already participating in an SL experience or due to the presentation of a project undertaken in another organisation.	Accepted. Service learning projects are recognised by the organisation's management and staff, who accept the organisation's educational role.

III	IV
<p>Decided. Participants, often together with the educators, decide the needs they wish to address by analysing problematic situations and subsequently selecting one of them.</p>	<p>Discovered. Participants discover the needs by conducting a group research project that involves a critical comprehension of reality.</p>
<p>Complex. Long-term service which enables experience and skills to be acquired in the execution of tasks of considerable complexity which represent high levels of involvement and demands on participants.</p>	<p>Creative. Service of variable duration made up of complex tasks designed by the participants themselves to resolve a problematic situation which requires creativity and, thus, still higher levels of involvement and demands on those participants</p>
<p>Civic. Service which responds to a community need, with participants being aware of its social dimension.</p>	<p>Transformative. Participants provide a response to a need and are aware of its social dimension. However, they are also aware of the limitations of any service that fails to consider political action.</p>
<p>Useful. The planned learning experiences and educational activities are closely related to the service. Their acquisition contributes to enhancing the quality of the intervention.</p>	<p>Innovative. The learning experiences are acquired on the basis of a research activity, are related to the curriculum or educational project and directly linked to the service to the community.</p>
<p>Shared. Participants and their educators share responsibility in the design and development of the activity as a whole.</p>	<p>Spearheaded. Participants become the promoters and leaders of the project and thus intervene in all its phases, taking decisions on all relevant aspects.</p>
<p>Cooperative. Process of interdependent work among participants in a group project which requires the organisation of complementary contributions to achieve a common goal.</p>	<p>Expansive. Group work goes beyond the initial number of participants and actively integrates other external agents, thus creating community action networks.</p>
<p>Continuous. In addition to times and tasks assigned for reflection, participants conduct reflective exercises throughout the entire project.</p>	<p>Productive. In addition to being planned and continuous, reflection involves participants in an activity of synthesis or creation which produces a new benefit to the community.</p>
<p>Reciprocal. Beneficiaries of the service and/or the social organisations, often in conjunction with the educators, carry out initiatives to express their gratitude and celebrate the success of the service.</p>	<p>Public. Recognition of the participants acquires a public dimension, either because the activity is made known to the general public or because the local authority publicly expresses its gratitude and highlights the civic value of the service.</p>
<p>Competence-based. The educators apply an assessment plan which defines goals, criteria, indicators and methodologies to improve and accredit participants' competence development.</p>	<p>Joint. Together with the educators, participants actively intervene at different stages in the preparation and application process of a competence assessment plan.</p>
<p>Agreed. At least two organisations –one educational and another social – jointly agree upon the conditions of application of a service-learning project which one of them has exclusively designed.</p>	<p>Built. The organisations involved in the project jointly design and apply it from its initiation until the end of the process.</p>
<p>Integrated. Service learning is present in more than one educational level, is linked to the curriculum of various subjects, and has implications in the centre's working methodology and organisation.</p>	<p>Identity-defining. Service learning forms part of the centre's culture and its educational project, and the centre presents it as a feature of its identity.</p>
<p>Integrated. Service learning is present in the organisation's programme of activities, and the organisation has the structure and staff necessary to ensure its implementation.</p>	<p>Identity-defining. Service learning forms part of the organisation's ethos and is presented as a characteristic of its identity. The organisation assigns the resources necessary to ensure the implementation of SL projects.</p>

15

Results of the rubric

Professionals from the centres and/or organisations involved in an experience can obtain a more accurate image of the project they are conducting by applying the rubric. Systemisation and representation of the data it produces can provide elements for analysis and reflection aimed at enhancing the project being evaluated.

The material obtained offers a mirror or x-ray effect which helps raise participants' awareness of the experience in which they are immersed, review the proposal's strengths and weaknesses, address questions that may arise and seek lines of improvement.

Application of the rubric and group reading of the resulting data can help bring out points that are eligible for subsequent study in a process of internal assessment and improvement. In fact, the very application of the rubric by the team in itself represents an important step in this process.

The following page contains a sample of the results of applying the rubric to analysis of a service-learning experience and its possible forms of data presentation.

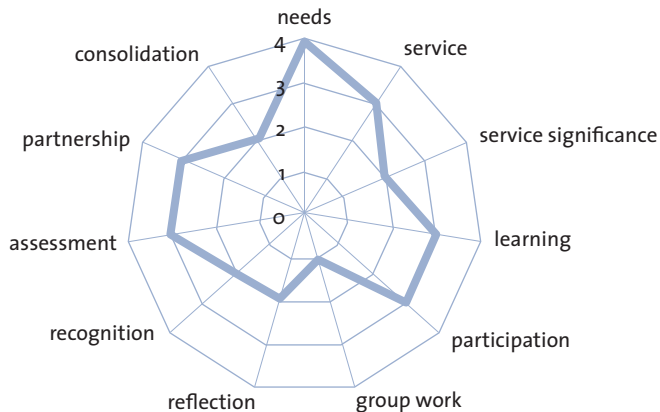
The transfer of these results and their systemisation and representation does not require a specific program. The tasks can be carried out with a normal text processor, as can their graphic representation.

Presentation of the results

Results table. Entering results of the rubric into a table enables visual presentation of the level achieved (from I to IV) for each of the dimensions encompassed by the experience under analysis. It shows the levels in which the project is more developed, as well as those where some improvement in execution could be made.

Dimensions/Levels	I	II	III	IV
Needs	Unknown	Presented	Decided	Discovered
Service	Simple	Continued	Complex	Creative
Significance of the service	Incidental	Necessary	Civic	Transformative
Learning	Spontaneous	Planned	Useful	Innovative
Participation	Closed	Defined	Shared	Spearheaded
Group work	Undetermined	Collaborative	Cooperative	Expansive
Reflection	Vague	Occasional	Continuous	Productive
Recognition	Casual	Intended	Reciprocal	Public
Assessment	Informal	Intuitive	Competence-based	Joint
Partnership	Unilateral	Directed	Agreed	Built
C. centre	Incipient	Accepted	Integrated	Identity-defining
C. organisation	Incipient	Accepted	Integrated	Identity-defining

Spider graph. This diagram enables a graphic representation to be made of the data. Information from the table is enhanced by the possibility of clearly viewing the level of development reached by each dimension, as well as the area covered by the experience as a whole, revealing its possibilities of expansion.



16

From analysis to enhancement of the experience

Results from application and representation of the rubric can be a good point of departure from which to initiate a process of internal evaluation, optimisation and innovation of service-learning projects.

The rubric is an instrument of analysis that enables us to consider each dimension in isolation, assign it a level of development, outline an image of the experience and decide where improvements could be made.

Proper use of the rubric requires structuring the dimensions we have analysed to compose or recompose the overall image of the experience. Following analysis, the experience should be evaluated once again as a whole.

It becomes evident that for an experience to be good not all its dimensions need to reach the maximum level; and that experiences do not need to resemble each other: there are endless ways of conducting good service-learning projects.

It is fundamental that stakeholders and promoters carry out this task themselves and that they do so together. Working as a team will make it easier to adapt to any changes and transform the proposal.

Steps to analyse a service-learning experience:

1. Apply the rubric as a team.
2. Apply it to the project as a whole, to individual sections or even to just one dimension.
3. Systemise and make a graphic representation of the results obtained.
4. Create spaces in which to read and analyse the data together.
5. Draw up a roadmap for the application of improvements.
6. Implement and consolidate the changes with the involvement of all participants.
7. Inform the centre about the analysis and improvement process

Guidelines for discussion

1. ***Start out from analysis of the most characteristic dimensions of SL. The very nature and definition of some dimensions makes them more essential in service-learning projects than others. These include the elements of learning, service, social needs, partnership and reflection.***

Wherever possible, a good way to initiate discussion is to examine the results obtained in these dimensions and jointly consider possibilities of improvement, taking proposals made in the guide into account

2. ***Examine the most representative results of the rubric. These results indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the experience. Though many dimensions will probably not have attained level IV, it is preferable that level I is not predominant.***

Study of the highest and lowest positions may be helpful in analysis of the project, bearing in mind that certain experiences are unable to progress in certain dimensions.

3. ***Plan actions to improve the project. Improving the project entails devoting time to the design of proposals to revise its weakest points. It is essential that all stakeholders find these ideas both possible and sustainable.***

The improvement process can be made more adaptable by prioritising the dimensions to be revised, agreeing the measures to be carried out, distributing responsibilities and establishing a timetable of action.

4. ***Progress beyond the experience. Analysed experiences can serve to inspire the revision and enhancement of other projects, to design new experiences and to open spaces of reflection that contribute to consolidating service learning in the centre or organisation.***

Systemising the revision process, evaluating the improvement proposals, sharing achievements and even applying the rubric again after some time has elapsed may all contribute to lending greater significance to the process.

RUBRIC FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF SL PROJECTS

First edition: June 2014

© text: Josep M. Puig, Xus Martín,
Laura Rubio, Josep Palos, Mónica Gijón,
Maribel de la Cerda and Mariona Graell

© of this edition: Fundació Jaume Bofill
Provença 324
08037 Barcelona
fbofill@fbofill.cat
www.fbofill.cat

Edited by Fundació Jaume Bofill

Graphic design: www.teresacanal.com



Universitat de Barcelona

Facultat de Pedagogia
Grup de Recerca en
Educació Moral (GREM)

reCerCaixa

FUNDACIÓ
JAUME
BOFILL

aps 
aprenentatgeservei
CENTRE PROMOTOR

Provença 324 - 08037 Barcelona
Tel. 934 588 700
centre@aprenentatgeservei.cat
www.aprenentatgeservei.cat